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NHTSA
U S Department of Transportation
Washington, DC

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Dear Sirs,

Three items that have been getting discussion lately that I should like to comment on:

First, with respect to airbags and small children, we should perhaps follow the French who require small children, under the age of 12 I believe, to ride in the back seat. An exception in the case of the single seat vehicle [like a pickup or sport car] could be to utilize a sensor in the seat cushion to disable the bag automatically unless the seat has 60 pounds or so weight on the seat. If instead of an automatic weight sensor in the seat you opt for a manual switch, it should be equipt with a holding relay, so that it requires manual switch actuation each time the vehicle is started to preclude the operator switching it off and continuing to leave it off. I don't think a simple manual switch is a good idea.

Second, again with credit to the French. Trucks on highways in France are limited to specific speeds dependent on their weight - light trucks are the same as passenger cars which as I remember is 140 KPH. The next larger size trucks are limited to 120, the next to 100, and the largest to 80. Each truck has a plate on the rear with the appropriate speed limit number on it. This system keeps the larger trucks under safer control, prevents them from being a threatening force to smaller vehicles, and helps in maintaining passing lanes open on four lane routes. I think it probably also helps to maintain the road system surface by reducing high speed heavy pounding, and that from a safety standpoint it seems more logical to slow down the behemoths.

Third, a lot of vehicles are now coming with daytime running lamps. Having been in Scandinavia I can understand that with their twisty roads, many fogs and twilight driving conditions that these lamps might be deemed neccessary, but in this country it does not seem that they are a requirement at all. In addition, I believe that poorly done, as many of them seem to be, that they are a traffic hazard rather than a safety measure! The problem, especially noticeable on some of the GM cars, is that the lamps are quite 'spotlumpy' and are aimed high directly into the oncoming drivers eyes or into his eyes via the rear view mirrors in the case you are being followed. VERY ANNOYING - there is enough stress on the road without this kind of irritation. Driver irritation does not lead to safe driving. If these lamps are allowed, they should not be spotlamp types, and they should not be aimed into other drivers eyes! The same would apply to lamps on during rain - the states that require these specify low beams which are non-irritating. Perhaps these should be a

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requirement as this concept does make good sense - connect the wiring so that they go on automatically with the wipers - it's easy to forget to turn them off!

Sincerely,

John D. Vette